



METROCROPS

Abstract

MetroCrops is an urban high density indoor farm located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The owner of MetroCrops, Steve Domyan, developed specific technology using a combination of LED lights and nutrients to grow high quality salad greens that can be harvested quickly, easily, and cleanly. These greens are capable of staying fresh for up to three weeks and deliver more nutrients than your average salad greens.

The problems that MetroCrops faced was, how to go about promoting their innovative product, how to better utilize the wasted space in their facility, and how to make the company more sustainable. These problems became our challenge and the basis of our research.

How might we explain the shelf life of the product to the consumer?

How might we promote the technology and the salad greens?

How might we make MetroCrops a more sustainable company?

Sustainability

MetroCrops is located in an industrial area, taking full advantage of a brownfield site. Use of these old existing warehouses breaths life into otherwise dilapidated areas. Composting the burlap used to grow the greens adds to the sustainability of the company. Earth Tub and Earth Cube are designed specifically for on-site composting of organic waste. Once the compost is formulated it can be refined into a fertilizing compost tea. The tea can then be bottled in axo-degradable plastic and sold to consumers for gardening needs. Distributing the composting tea to be sold in locally owned garden shops not only brings awareness to sustainability and the life cycle of a product but also gives MetroCrops a new avenue for profit.

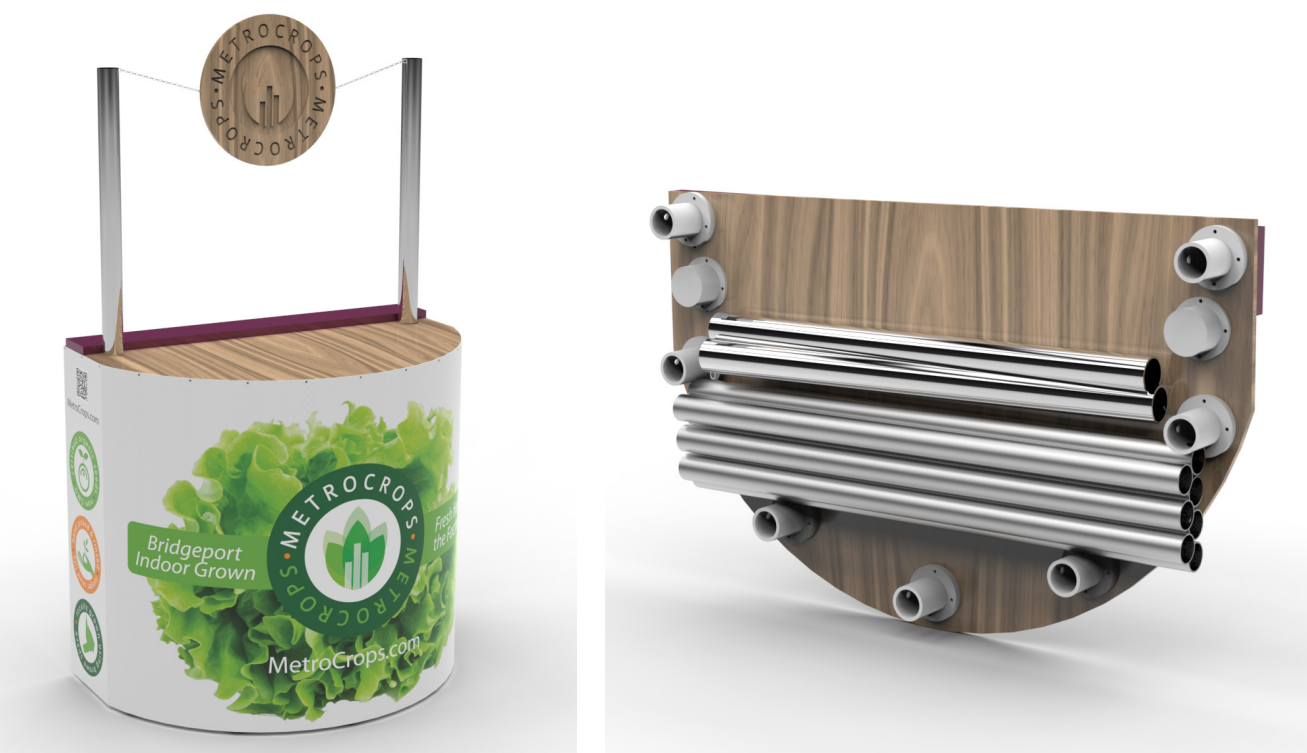


Promotion

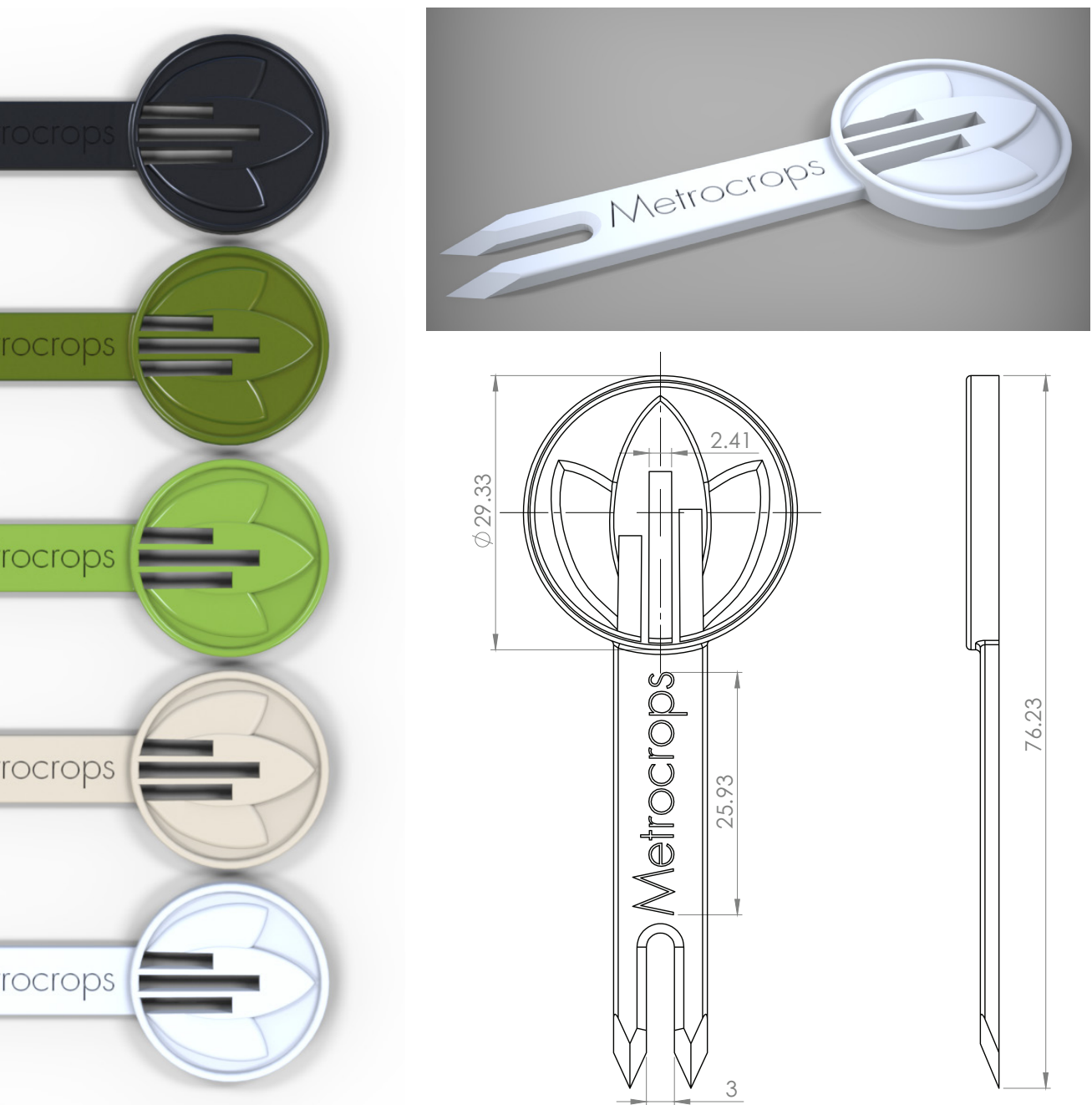
To promote both the quality of the product and the ingenuity of the technology we developed several solutions. A portable scale model of the technology used to grow the product known as the grow rig and grow trays, was created to be carried around or displayed in the promotional space to demonstrate how the growing kit works. This could be shown to educate customers as well as interest potential investors.



A kiosk was designed as a promotional tool that would be used to attract new customers to MetroCrops. It has been designed to be unique, collapsible, lightweight (estimated at 50 pounds), and able to be used by anyone that purchases MetroCrops technology. In addition, the majority of the parts that make up the structure are inexpensive and can be purchased from any local hardware store, aside from the custom cuplings on the bottom, which would need to be 3D printed.



A taste test giveaway concept was designed to help people remember the MetroCrops brand after visiting a kiosk, farm stand, or any other promotional event. The giveaways are made of 100% biodegradable plastic made from corn to further promote the eco-friendly aspect of MetroCrops and fulfill an environmental responsibility.



Space

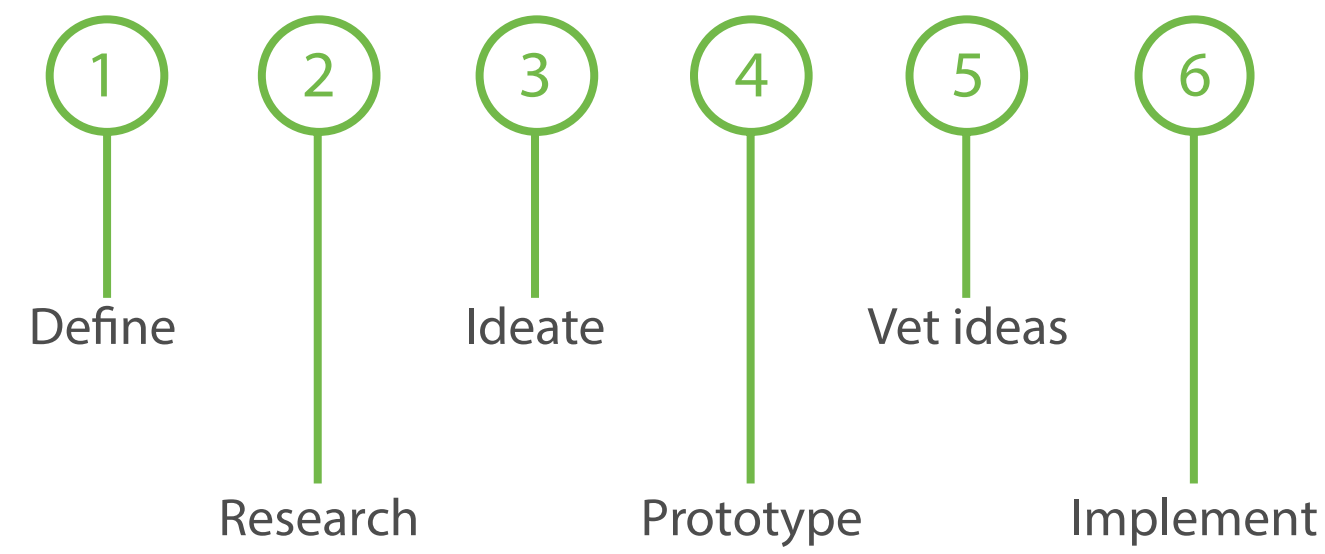
We developed a promotional interior space adjacent to the grow room to host several types of gatherings. The new showroom can accommodate up to 30 people for educational discussions or a smaller group of investors for presentations. A kitchen would allow for taste testing, luring the investors in, helping them to understand the outstanding quality and taste of the product. In consideration of cost, all of the furniture was specified from IKEA, the ceiling would be painted white and the flooring would remain concrete.

Branding played an important role in the design of the interior. The large MetroCrops logo will be painted onto the wall you see upon entry into the space. Above the kitchen area an info graphic will explain the long shelf life of the product. A ceiling detail taken directly from the logo lights the foyer and the discussion area.



Conclusion

A lot of people will explain design management as the business side of design, however, it is the design side of business. The meaning of design is to plan. Without a logical plan there will not be a logical solution. The plan or process being followed tells the story of how you reached your solution and why it matters. As design management students we apply this same thinking to business problems. For our client, MetroCrops, we applied this methodology to develop solutions for the triple bottom line: people, planet and profit.



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